

Hebrews 11:8-16

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[0 : 00] But we're in Hebrews chapter 11, we're going to be in verses 8 through 16 as we just continue to make our way through the book of Hebrews. If you have been with us for some time and you understand how we've gotten here, if you have not been with us, we understand that the overarching theme of the book of Hebrews is the superiority of Jesus Christ, that Jesus is better.

That he is better than all things, that he is better than any work or any effort or anything that anyone could ever trust in. Namely, the author of Hebrews is writing to the Hebrew people who are confronted with making a decision.

And it's good to keep all these things in mind because this also helps us to understand how we get to the characters that we have listed for us in Hebrews chapter 11. Because really, we could go throughout history and list any number of people who just display and exhibit what we call salvific faith, or faith which leads to salvation.

But the author of Hebrews uses people that would speak in particular to the Hebrew people because he is encouraging them to make a decision. As a matter of fact, after really building his case for about nine chapters in the first part of Hebrews chapter 10, he then calls for the decision. In Hebrews 10, he says, okay, since all of these things are true, make a decision. I mean, that's kind of putting in Billy Joel's terminology. He says, decide either if you're going to go all the way with Jesus Christ or if you're going to go back to the law.

[1 : 24] And he reminds them that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God. And he reminds them of the severity of the choice in which they are making that they will give an account.

And they're either going to give an account, each and every one of us will give an account to that living God someday on why we deserve to stand in his presence. And why we deserve to spend eternity in his presence.

And he's calling them. He says, you're either going to do it by the works of your hands or by the efforts of your practicing Judaism and following the law and according to all these commandments and do this and don't do that and make sure.

But he said, those things, you're going to fall short. You're not going to keep every one of those. Or you're going to trust completely in Jesus Christ. And he is showing them over and over and over again that Jesus is greater.

He's greater than the law. He's greater than the angels. He's greater than any effort that man could ever put in. And then he calls for this decision. And at the end of Hebrews chapter 10, he says, now, once you have committed, once you have made that commitment, then don't look back.

[2 : 28] Right? We are not of those, he says at the end of Hebrews chapter 10, who fall away into destruction. But we are those who look forward and move forward according to faith. And he starts speaking of this faith.

Now, we have prefaced this and said that each and every one of us exhibits faith every day. Right? It's not a matter of if we have faith. It's just a matter of what we have faith in.

We are either having faith in our own reasoning, faith in our own understanding, faith in our own efforts, or faith in someone else's thought process, or faith in something that somebody else taught us. Or we exhibit faith each and every day.

There's no such thing as a life lived without faith. It is just what type of faith or what is the object of that faith that is really in question.

And the author here says, we are not of those who shrink back, but we are those who press forward. And we have said that it is salvific faith. It is genuine, true faith.

[3 : 26] And then he devotes a whole chapter, Hebrews chapter 11. We commonly refer to it as the heroes of the faith chapter. But he devotes this whole chapter of showing us what genuine, salvific faith looks like.

What it looks like on display in the world. And he goes all the way back, as we have seen last week. He goes all the way back to the very first person who had faith in history.

And that is Abel. Because Adam and Eve were not required to walk by faith because they walked in the cool of the day with the Lord their God, right? So they had walked by sight. Even after the fall, and they were put out of the Garden of Eden, they knew that God was real.

They used to walk with him in the cool of the day. But their children, the descendants of Adam and Eve, had to walk by faith based upon what their parents testified to them.

So we saw that by faith, Abel offered a better sacrifice than his brother Cain. And though he is dead, he still speaks. And by faith, Enoch walked with God. He was pleasing. And he was taken up so that he did not see death.

[4 : 31] And by faith, Noah, when he was born, prepared an ark and was given righteousness. And what a beautiful picture it is. And then he's just moving on through history.

Now, we would love to say, as, you know, individuals seeking to walk by faith, at least, we're hoping to. And I love the fact, of all things, or a number of things I love in Scripture.

But I love this. Scripture is real, right? Scripture is accurate. And it doesn't sugarcoat. And it doesn't make things any easier than they should. So even in Hebrews chapter 11, when the author of Hebrews is showing us what faith looks like, He has all these great people who conquer and slay the giants and win the battles and overcome great obstacles by faith.

And then he closes the chapter, which shows that salvific faith at times also looks like suffering.

There were those who were sawn in too. Those who were destitute, cast out, despised by the world, hated, hidden caves, wandered around in sheep's clothing.

There were those who the world was not, it says, worthy of. That God said that their faith was so strong, this world was not worthy of them.

[5 : 39] So, He let them die what the world would consider a horrendous death. So faith is not always about making it easy, right? Faith is actually about what we will see in the very last verse that we read this morning.

That is, Hebrews 16, but before we get there, we're going to read our text, Hebrews chapter 11, verses 8 through 16. So if you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm asking you to join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God together.

And the text before us says, By faith, Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

By faith, he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise. For he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

By faith, even Sarah herself received ability to conceive even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants as the stars of the heaven in number, and innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

[6 : 51] All these died in faith without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.

And indeed, if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. Look at verse 16. But as it is, they desire a better country.

That is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for the privileged opportunity of standing together and reading your word with one another. We thank you, Lord, for the privilege of hearing it.

Lord, we now pray by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit that you would speak to our hearts and minds. We pray that its truth would captivate us. Lord, that it would capture us where we're at, and it would lead us, Lord, to where you want us to be.

[7 : 57] That we would be conformed more to your image, for your glory, for your honor, for yours alone. And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. That last portion of verse 16 there.

Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God. I want you to see this morning what an unashamed faith looks like.

What an unashamed faith looks like. Not so much the faith that we are unashamed of, but the faith which leads God to be unashamed as to count us as his people and he as our God.

There are a multitude of people, I believe, who would love to claim that God is their God, of which the Bible says God is ashamed to call them his people. Jesus says a multitude of people will come to him and say, Lord, Lord, did we not cast out demons in your names?

And did we not do this in your name? And did we not do all this in your name? Lord, Lord, did we not name you as Lord? They were using the right terminology. They were even doing the right practice. And the Bible says that Jesus says, But I will look at them and say, Verily, verily, depart from me, you workers of wickedness, for I never knew you.

[9 : 12] It's not a matter of did he or did they know him, but really the question was, did he know them? There are a number of people who want to claim and to call upon God as their God.

But sadly, the reality is, there are fewer people of which God will claim as his people and be unashamed to be called their God. Because it is based upon this reality of true salvific faith. And we have a display of it here of two individuals, really, the patriarchs of the Hebrew people, Abraham and Sarah. Abram called out of the land of the Ur of the Chaldeans in order to be made a people for God's own special purposes and privileges and for God to put on display what it looks like to be a devoted follower of God.

He put Abraham, Abram who would later become Abraham, on display for the world to see. And that testimony has resonated throughout history. It is still resonating today. And as Paul reminds us in Romans chapters 9, 10, and 11, God is not through with the Israelite nation.

He is not through because the plans and the purposes of God and the promises of God will not be thwarted. That which he has promised will come about. But we see in God's gracious movement and God's gracious choosing that he begins to put on display this couple.

[10 : 29] And through this couple, he is showing the world what it looks like to have faith. Does it look perfect? No. If you're looking for perfect people, you're not going to find them in Scripture other than the person Jesus Christ. Because each and every one which God chose, each and every one which God used, and each and every one which God puts on display of what it looks like to follow him messes up.

And I think that's good news. That's good news for a sinful humanity. That's good news for Billy Joel Calvert because I mess up and I fall and I falter, right? Abraham is not perfect. Abraham is called in his imperfections and led on to perfection.

As Paul would say, I'm not yet what I should be, but I am pressing on to what I am going to be. The question was not, did Abraham ever attain perfection? The question we really must ask is, did the walk of Abraham by faith get him closer to the God who was leading him throughout his life? And that answer resonates with an absolute yes. We see that his family was not perfect. We understand that. I mean, all we have to do is read the Old Testament and we see the mess ups and the failures of that.

But we see a perfect God calling them into relationship with him. So the question we must ask ourselves is, what does an unashamed faith look like? And we see four truths from this passage of what exactly an unashamed faith looks like and how it is put on display.

[11 : 48] Number one, we see that it is a faith that acts upon the declared word of God. It is a faith that acts upon the declared word of God.

It does something. I've used this illustration a number of times. I can claim to have faith in anything. But until you see me take action upon the very thing that I claim to have faith in, then I really do not have faith upon it.

I can say that I trust this or I trust that, but until I put my all upon it, I really do not trust it. And we understand that. Look at what it says. By faith, Abraham, when he was called.

By faith, Abraham, when he was called. Now, let's take it in its proper historical settings. Because we don't ever want to take the text out of context and therefore assume a pretext and really mess it up.

So we want to take it in its proper settings. When Abraham was called, his name was Abram. Abram was living in the land of Ur of the Chaldeans. That's important to you because the land of Ur of the Chaldeans was the birthplace of idolatry.

[13 : 02] As a matter of fact, Abram, when he was called, prior to his calling, was an idolatrous, paganistic, more than likely moon-worshipping individual.

He was an individual full of problems because his society was full of problems. And God spoke to that man in the midst of his problems. He called him.

Now, we understand that his response to that calling from the rest of the biblical text was not absolutely perfect. You remember that when we read the Old Testament, we see in Genesis 12, God's calling of Abram.

And we see the Abrahamic promise given to him there in the passage of Genesis 12. But then when we skip over, and we don't skip over, we read through. That's what we do.

We read through and we get to the book of Acts. All those multitude of pages later. We get to the book of Acts. And in the book of Acts, Acts chapter 7, there is the defense of Stephen before the council.

[14:00] And Stephen is given this declaration. And I praise God for Stephen's declaration. And he's given an account of the history of the Hebrew people. And he references Abraham's call. And he talks about how Abraham was called from the land of the Ur of the Chaldeans and he stopped in Haran.

Remember when he stopped in Haran, by the way, Haran is halfway. Halfway between Ur and Canaan. Haran is about halfway. He only went halfway. Now we read that in the Genesis account, but we don't know why.

The reason we understand it according to the book of Acts in Acts chapter 7. I'm trying to slow down, dear. I know I should. The reason he does it in Acts chapter 7 is because it says that he took his dad with him.

Now God didn't call Abraham's dad. He called Abram. And it wasn't until Abraham's dad died in Haran did God renew the call and he went to Canaan.

So understand this. He partially obeyed. But God is faithful and patient. And waited until those hindrances were removed. Because the call to Abraham was what?

[15:01] To leave your family and follow me. Abraham said, I'll follow him and take my family with him. God said, I can wait. I can wait. I can wait.

And I'll wait as long as I have to until I get you where you're going to be. And when his dad died, then he called him again. But look, this is what I want you to see. What the author of Hebrews tells us is that when Abraham was called by faith, when he was called, he went out.

By faith, when Abraham was called, he went out. Even though, I believe it is biblically accurate to say he did not fully obey because he took his father with him.

Even though I think it was a sin in the fact that he took Lot with him. Because that caused problems. Lot always, I mean, taking something else along, it caused problems, right? There was division. There was a battle.

Lot ended up getting in trouble. He went down to Sodom and Gomorrah. He started hanging out in the places of the world. Abraham had to go fight a battle. And those are all cool stories. But it could have been very easily avoided.

[16:03] And he had just went. Even though I don't think that he was perfect in his obedience, I understand this. When he knew what God was calling him to do, he took action upon it, even in his imperfections.

You know why that gives me comfort? It's because quite often when the word of God commands me to do something, I'm not perfect in my obedience. And neither are you.

Because we are trying to obediently obey in imperfection conditions. We all have problems. We're all messed up, right? We all have issues. And God's not looking for perfection.

What God is looking for is action and what he says. By faith, Abraham, when he was called, went out. He did something. Notice what he didn't do. He didn't consult others.

He didn't begin to reason. He didn't go to the synagogue of the moon worshipers. He didn't ask anybody else if God had ever told them something like that. He didn't begin. It says he went out.

[17:06] By faith, he took action upon the very word of God that was declared to him. He began to do something. You understand this.

We are of a great privileged society. We live at a great privileged time in history in which we have the fullness, the Bible tells us in Hebrews chapter 1, the fullness of the revealed word of God.

Now, in these last days, God has said unto us through his son, Jesus Christ, it says in Hebrews chapter 1, everything that God is ever going to say to mankind is contained, I believe, with all of my heart, with all of my being, and all of my soul, in the 66 books from Genesis to Revelations, which

we call the Bible.

Now, I believe that we need greater revelation of what he's already told us. Sometimes we need clarification because God has already told us, and we need to say, Father, I know you've told me, but I'm having a hard time understanding it.

I know you've already said it, but I want you to help me understand it, and that's why we have the presence of the Holy Spirit. That God is speaking to us now more than any other time in history. We have a greater word than a burning bush.

[18:13] We had a louder sound than a crowing rooster. We have a greater influence than God speaking to Abraham. We have the word of God that can be declared to us through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in which Jesus says, indwells the believer.

So to say that God is silent is a mockery. What is absent is the action upon the word of God which is being declared to the people of God.

By faith, Abraham, when he was called, went out. Look at how he did it. It says that he went out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance.

He went out not knowing where he was going. Go back and read again the Genesis account. God did not say, Abraham, I want you to leave here. And when you leave here, we're going to stay over in Haran for a little while.

But Haran's not the place. We're going to leave Haran, and then I'm going to take you down there next to the Mediterranean Sea. There's going to be this Jordan River Valley that's there. You'll see the Sea of Galilee, even though it wasn't referred to as the Sea of Galilee in the Old Testament time.

[19:19] There'll be this sea at the bottom of it that is so salty that nothing will go around it. It's kind of a barren land. But this is the land I'm giving you. He didn't do that. What God said, go to a place I will show you. Do you understand?

And it wasn't until Abraham stepped foot in Canaan that God said, this is it. Because by faith, all we need to know is God's calling. We don't need to know where he's ending.

By faith, when God says, walk, Abraham started walking. And he would have never known where God was taking him until he started taking action upon the very first thing God told him to do. Henry Blackaby used to say, until we are doing that which God has already revealed to us, he will not reveal anything else to us.

In his study, knowing and doing the will of God, he said many multitude of people, multitude of people said, oh, I just wish I knew what God's will was for my life. I just wish I knew what God's will was for my life. I wish I knew what God wanted me to do.

And Henry Blackaby used to say, when you're already doing the things God has already revealed to you, then he will reveal something else to you. And then he made this declaration. I remember hearing him say it.

[20:25] He said, God has his revealed will. What God wants to do for you is right here. And when you've done all this, let me know. Then we can go to him and ask him something else. I said, wow. He said, when you're done doing everything he's already told you to do in here, let me know.

And we'll go ask God what else he wants us to do. We don't need to know where it's going to end. We just need to know where he's calling us to begin. And by faith, we take action upon that.

There's a number of us following the same reading plan throughout this year. A number of us. I can almost guarantee that each and every one of us, though we're reading the same passages, each and every one of us, God is saying something different to us.

Not that it's a different word, but that we're at different places and different positions. And he is revealing things by the power and presence of his spirit to individuals. And he is speaking to us. And the things he is revealing to me, he wants me to take action upon. And the things he is revealing to you, he wants you to take action upon. And what he is calling us is by faith, we act upon the declared word of God.

[21:28] Number two. An unashamed faith is a faith that anticipates greater things to come. It is a faith that anticipates greater things to come. Look at what it says.

It says, by faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise. For he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Faith anticipates greater things to come. It's amazing to me that Abraham journeyed so far. And he went there. And when he finally got there, after Lot, by the way, I know you're going to go back and read this account.

You need to understand. And we'll kind of put everything in text because some of you might have thought I was a little presumptuous in what I said. That he was wrong in taking Lot with him. God didn't take him from Haran until his dad died. And God didn't tell him the land he stood in was his land until Lot was gone.

After Lot went down to the valley, God says, now look around. This is your land. Everywhere you go, he says, go east, go west, go north, go south.

[22 : 28] Everywhere your foot touches, I'm giving to you. Now, I don't know about you, but if I was Abraham, I'd say, this is my land. I'm going to take it. If this is my land, I'm going to take it.

Now, you know that by the power and presence of the Lord that was with him, he was strong enough. How do we know that? Because when Lot got himself in a fix and those five kings captured Lot and took him away, those five kings messed up.

Abraham could care less that Sodom and Gomorrah fell. What bothered him was that his nephew Lot was taken. So Abraham gathered the servants of his household, about 300 men, and he went and whooped up on those five kings.

I know that's not good biblical language, but it's pretty good Billy Joe language. He went and whooped up on them and took the captives captive, right? He brought them back. He captured them. So that tells me he was stronger than at least five of the kings that were reigning in the land that belonged to him.

But he didn't ever own anything but a tomb. Because it says, By faith, though he owned it, he was content to wander around like a stranger in the land that was promised to him, living in tents and never dwelling in a permanent location.

[23 : 38] Because faith does not look at what has already been provided as if it was the end result. Faith understands that there is something greater coming than what we already possess.

Faith is always looking forward, anticipating a day of a greater inheritance than that which the Lord God has already provided. We are all enriched by the world's standards and we are all enriched with the blessings of heaven.

But faith looks forward and says, But what is coming is better than anything I have right now. What is coming? It can't even compare to what I have. The city whose foundations has an architect and builder who is God is so much better than anywhere I could ever live today.

Faith does not take ownership of that which has already been provided. Faith instead anticipates what is coming as being greater. And friend, listen to me. When we live with an anticipation of greater things coming, it helps us to gain contentment with the things we already possess.

The reason we have so little contentment is because we think we're living our best life now. I am so glad that I'm not living my best life now.

[24 : 50] Because this life that we live in this flesh, it's not always good. I am so thankful that whatever we could attain in this life does not even compare to the things that faith has promised us in the next.

Abraham walking around looking, understanding that through the power and presence of God, he was greater and mightier and stronger than anything around him. Yet, he was content to wander around like a stranger in the land he possessed.

Not only was he content, we miss it. You understand that when he bought the cave to bury Sarah, his wife in, you remember the occurrence, right? He saw this cave a little like a great burial ground. Abraham wanted to buy it to bury his wife in. Abraham would in turn be buried in it. His descendants would be buried in it. And we kind of lose this a little bit when we were going through the book of Genesis.

We talked about it. Abraham went and he said, I'd like to have that filled. And he was sitting at the elders. He was sitting at the gate of the city of the people who owned it. And we're kind of getting the context here. They said, well, we're going to give you the field.

[26 : 02] And Abraham said, no, you're not going to give me anything. I want to buy it from you. Now, rightfully, it was already his. God had already promised it, right? But he says, you're not going to give me anything. I don't want anybody to think that you have enriched me. I want to buy it.

And a man names a price. A man who owns a field says, oh, what is such and such a price between two friends? Well, what we fail to lose is the price that he named was an absurd amount. It was probably double, if not more, than what the land was worth.

And Abraham paid it. He said, okay, I'll pay it. You know why? He even overpaid for that which he really already owned.

His deed was recorded in heaven, not on earth, but he overpaid on earth because he knew that what he was gaining in heaven was so much better than what he could pay on earth. Faith anticipates greater things coming.

And it understands that. Number three, faith acknowledges, and this is good, faith acknowledges ones on personal weakness and limitations.

[27 : 10] Faith does not fool us to think that we have it all together. Faith does not fool us to think that we can do it on our own self. As a matter of fact, if faith does anything, true salvific faith, it highlights our weaknesses and failures.

I believe this morning we were reading in the book of 1 Samuel. I don't believe. I know. I was reading through the book of 1 Samuel. And I know that there's the account there in 1 Samuel when Jonathan takes his armor bearer.

Saul is reigning, and Saul is in the height of his reign. And if you haven't read, I don't mean to be a spoiler if you haven't read your daily reading, but you'll see it when you get to it. That Jonathan takes his armor bearer and says, come on, let's go armor bearer.

Let's go see what's going on with these people, these enemies of ours. And armor bearer says, wherever you go, Jonathan, I'm with you. And he went up there and he says, if they tell us to stay there, we'll stay there. But if they tell us to come down, we'll see that as a sign that God's given them into our hands.

And then Jonathan makes this declaration. Jonathan says, For God is not limited to deliver by multitude or by few.

[28 : 17] God's not limited in how he works. He can do the same with the few that he can do with the multitude. But what Jonathan is saying is, it's just going to be you and I.

Everybody's going to know it. When the count was taken through the camp, they found out that Jonathan and his armor bearer were gone. There's only two of them out there. They're fighting the whole garrison of soldiers by themselves. There's only two of them.

What faith does is it highlights our weakness. But it magnifies God's greatness. Because look at what it says. By faith, even Sarah herself received ability to conceive even beyond the proper time of life since she considered him faithful who had promised.

By faith, Sarah, she received the ability to conceive. Now, conception is a natural process. But it is a natural process that has a timeline.

Let me take a drink. God did a supernatural work through a natural thing. By faith. Because it says that she believed the promises of God.

[29 : 28] Look at this. Verse 12. Therefore, there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that. You ever notice this throughout Scripture?

The people God uses, their weaknesses are always spoken of. There's the harlot. Every time her name's brought up, she's referred to as the harlot. There's Sarah, who's old and advanced in years. There's Abraham. He's as good as dead. There's Israel, who's always kniving. And Jacob, you know, he's always kniving and conspiring and doing all these things. There's all these people. There's David. His family's messed up, right? Literally. Every time we read, he's a man after God's own heart, but he cannot maintain his own heart, his own problems, his own family. All these people.

There's Peter, who wants to walk on water and then sink, and he wants to cut Malchus' ear off. He's always doing something. He's always talking. Sometimes it's the wrong thing. He also denies.

There's Thomas, who's always doubting. All throughout the Scripture, what we find is people's weaknesses highlighted.

[30 : 32] And that's good. Because faith acknowledges one's weakness and limitations. Friend, listen to me. It's a good thing when God calls you to do something you can't do.

It's a good thing when God calls you to do something that you must acknowledge your own weakness. Because at that point, you're trusting in one greater than you, and you can't trust in yourself.

It's a great thing. It's a great place to be. Because if whatever he's calling you to do, you can tell me how you can do it, then I'm going to tell you more than likely he didn't call you to it. Because we naturally are drawn to the things we are strong at.

I hated public speaking. I hated it with a passion. I went through public speaking in MTSU. We still had to go in person. I had to stand in front of a class all the way in 1998.

I had to stand in front of it. No, 1999. I had to give my first public speech to people I didn't know. Thankfully, it was an informative speech. I gave my informative speech, a five-minute speech, on how to change the oil in a 1967 Mustang.

[31 : 42] Because that's about the only thing I knew anything about at that time. I had a 1967 Mustang. Don't get all excited about it. It was a little straight 6200 sewing machine engine, right? It wasn't like a hot rod or anything. You could sit in the engine bay with it.

It was real easy to do. But I gave that speech. That's all I knew. I hated it. I had to give another speech. I hated it. My son this year went to speech class. I said, man, you chose the right time to do it.

He got to do it video-wise, right? He'd record it. And if he didn't like it, he'd delete it. I only got one shot. Stand in front of people. How to change the oil. Man, I hated public speaking.

Still not a big fan of it. So when God called me to pass, I was like, I don't know about that. I can't do it. He said, you're exactly right. That's why I'm asking you to do it. You can't do it.

You can't do it. Faith highlights our weakness and limitations. And it causes us to humbly acknowledge him. Praise God for the places he puts us that we cannot do on our own.

[32 : 41] Praise God that we have to say, I am as good as dead at that. But I believe, fourth and finally, listen to me. Faith affirms the ability of God to do the impossible.

Faith affirms the ability of God to do the impossible. How did Sarah receive the ability?

Because she considered him faithful. Who promised? She considered him faithful. Friends, listen to me. Quit considering yourself.

When God calls us to do something as a church or as individuals, quite often the very first thing we consider is ourselves. Well, I or we or I don't know if...

Stop. Faith considers him who promised. Because one thing we find is if we consider ourselves, we'll sit on our hands and we'll sit still.

[33 : 45] Because Satan's always got a reason and man always has a feeling not to do anything. Abraham could have said, you know what? It's pretty good right here in Ur. I like this place.

Sarah could have said, I'm beyond that time. I'm too old for kids. Too old for a baby. You know how much work they require? I don't want to do that.

Plus, we've already worked it out another way. Right? We got Ishmael. Things seem to work out. She could have said that, but she didn't. Now she laughed. Perhaps we understand, again, imperfect obedience, but obedience.

She finally says, If God has promised it, it must be. And look at what the Word of God says. All these died in faith without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

Friend, they saw things they never got to attain. We're on the other side of the cross. The great promise is Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

[34 : 52] Charles Spurgeon said, Every takes your hand, plow a ditch and go straight to the cross because it always does it. Look at what it says. They looked afar and saw there is the promise, but they never attained it.

We're on the other side. We've seen the promises fulfilled. If the virgin can give birth, if it is Emmanuel who dwells among us, if he can live the sinless life, if he can die the perfect death, if he can walk out of the tomb on the third day, if he can manifest himself for 40 days among his believer, more than 500 at one time, and if they could stand there and watch him being carried away into the clouds of the air, and if the angels testified, said, In like manner he will come back again.

If these things are all true, and they are, then whatever he has promised will be. And when we consider him who has promised more than we consider ourselves, we get to this last thing.

We make it clear that we are seeking a country of our own. This isn't it. This isn't all there is. And indeed, if they had been thinking of the country from which they came, they would have had opportunity to return.

Listen to me. This is important. Because these people are thinking, Do I go back to Judaism, or do I go to Christ? Do I go to Judaism? Do I go to Christ? Do I go? Do I go? Do I go? Abraham said, I'll never go back to Mesopotamia.

[36 : 17] By faith, we are not of those who shrink back, but we push on. Friend, listen to me.

Anytime you want to go back, Satan will open the door and allow you to come back. But by faith, you say, I'm not going back. I'm not going back.

Because the land I'm seeking is not the land I've been. I've lived in that land before called sin, and I didn't like it. I'm not going to lie. It might have appealed to the flesh. It might have been fun every now and then. But its path was leading to destruction, hell, and eternal condemnation.

I don't want to go back. So by faith, I look forward, I press ahead. And then it says this. It is our better country. That is a heavenly one.

Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. Jesus says, What do you say there, John?

I'm going to prepare a city for you. Who do you say that to? Who do you say that to? To the very men who are all about to deny him.

[37 : 16] To the very men who are all going to forsake him. He didn't ask them for perfection. He asked them for true, genuine, unashamed faith.

He asked them to follow him in faithfulness. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. God, so thankful for the opportunity you've given us.

We're so grateful. Your word speaks to our hearts and minds. And Lord, we pray now we take action upon you. Oh God, whatever you have said to us, we pray that our lives will be matched with it through action and obedience.

And God, ultimately, you will be glorified and honored through the faith of your people. We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.

[38 : 50] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.